Program Management Committee

Issue Brief: 2-1

Independent Steering Committee:

Terms of Reference and Mode of Operation

6 May 2017

CGIAR is a global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food-secure future. The CGIAR Research Program on Livestock provides research-based solutions to help smallholder farmers, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists transition to sustainable, resilient livelihoods and to productive enterprises that will help feed future generations. It aims to increase the productivity of livestock agri-food systems in sustainable ways, making meat, milk and eggs more available and affordable across the developing world. The Program brings together five core partners: the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) with a mandate on livestock; the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), which works on forages; the International Center for Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), which works on small ruminants and dryland systems; the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) with expertise particularly in animal health and genetics and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) which connects research into development and innovation and scaling processes.

The Program thanks all donors and organizations who globally supported its work through their contributions to the [**CGIAR system**](http://www.cgiar.org/about-us/our-funders/)

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**Livestock CRP**

**Independent Steering Committee:**

**Terms of reference and mode of operation**

**The Issue**

The Livestock CRP proposal made the commitment to constitute an Independent Steering Committee (ISC) based on the Phase 2 CRP proposal guidance which required adoption of the former Consortium Board recommended version of CRP governance giving the ISC a strong executive role in overseeing the CRP. The ILRI Board and ILRI management have not been comfortable with this executive model, and the expectation has been that there is sufficient concern across the Centres and CRPs that the recommendation would be reviewed and there will be a consensus to re-orient the ISC role toward a clearer advisory function. Based on the ILRI Board’s endorsement, the Livestock CRP is therefore moving forward with implementing an advisory model based on the terms of reference as previously agreed for the Science & Partnership Advisory Committee (SPAC) under the Livestock & Fish CRP.

Managing appropriately the advisory function of the L&F SPAC turned out to be challenging, creating a number of tensions and frustrations on both sides. A mode of operation is proposed for better harnessing the expertise of the ISC and providing independent oversight of our research quality and investment decisions.

**Terms of reference**

The terms of reference for the ISC recommended by the former Consortium Board version of CRP governance included:

* Providing strategic direction to, and oversight of, the CRP, including priority setting and the evaluation of results
* reviewing the Program of Work and Budget (POWB) developed by the CRP’s management committee and recommending it to the Lead Center Board for approval
* overseeing external evaluations of CRP programs and activities;
* maintaining awareness of stakeholder perspectives and needs
* serving as an indirect report for the CRP leader
* reporting at least annually to the Lead Center Board (through the lead Center Board Chair or the Chair of the Board’s program committee)
* serving as an expert resource to the CRP and the senior management team.

To avoid a perceived conflict with the governance role of the ILRI Board, the proposed terms of reference for the Livestock CRP ISC consistent with what had been agreed for the L&F CRP SPAC are:

The ISC provides expert advisory support and guidance to the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock and Fish (L&F CRP) and to the ILRI Board for purposes of:

* Providing strategic direction and independent advice to the program, including:
  + The coherence of the program’s priority setting and associated investment strategy
  + the quality of the program’s science and approaches, and the resulting knowledge outputs, with a focus on generating Global Public Goods
  + the relevance of outputs and progress being made to achieve the Intermediate Development Outcomes set by the program
  + the strategic direction and priority setting for program planning and resource mobilization
  + identification of key audiences for program outputs and strategies for engagement and communication
  + the strategic relevance of the program’s partnerships in science and development
* Reviewing the Program of Work and Budget (POWB) prepared by the Program Management Committee (PMC) and providing a recommendation to the ILRI Board (*timing of the review to be determined*)
* Overseeing external evaluations of the program, its Flagships and specific sets of activities. This would include:
  + Advising on the CRP’s proposed schedule of CRP-Commissioned External Evaluations (CCEE)
  + Participating on the evaluation reference group of each CCEE and Internal External Evaluation
  + Advise the ILRI Board on the CRP and ILRI management response to the evaluation report
* Maintaining awareness of stakeholder perspectives and needs in the implementation of the CRP
* Provide a report to the CRP management committee and the ILRI Board twice per year, transmitted with the CRP management response for consideration by the Program Committee. The SPAC chair will attend one meeting of the Program Committee per year, in person or virtually, for the agenda item on the CRP
* Serving as an expert resource to the program and the senior management team.

**Mode of operation**

The ISC is meant to evaluate science quality and to provide advice on science opportunities and how the science can be made ‘better’. This means they potentially play both an evaluator and a coaching role. Their evaluation role should be seen as having clout and influencing management decisions. The proposed strategy to channel these roles is outlined below.

Each ISC member (except the Chair) is assigned the flagship related to their expertise. They are the mentor for that flagship, providing more in-depth analysis and advice to it.

In the 1st-2nd quarter, as the annual report is being finalized or sometime soon afterwards, they meet and review each flagship’s evolving Strategy & Implementation Plan, as well as the overall program (M&E, SIF investments). Similar to what SPAC had wanted, the flagships present their Theory of Change (or at least updates to it), their key activities/research lines, the progress achieved the previous year, its significance and implications for next steps. The ISC then provides critical review and advice, including recommending whether each research line **merits no change in level of effort, less, or more**, and their rationale, with the flagship mentor responsible for arguing the case and recording the consensus. A similar presentation is provided on the overall CRP. The end result should be a set of recommendations by Cluster/line of research and across flagships, informed by the previous year’s performance, plan of work & budget for the current year and the proposed next steps for the plan of work & budget for the following year – and how all of this fits within the flagship Strategy & Implementation Plan, including its Theory of Change. This process gets the ISC to make clear recommendations with supporting rationale. The recommendation can then be used as the basis for the PMC to adjust budget allocation accordingly, and importantly will help stimulate the PMC to be more critical as well. A second meeting in the 3rd-4th quarter could dive into specific bits of research, or focus more on the Theory of Change aspects as the flagships fine-tune their work and budget for the following year.

This type of process would strengthen our quality control and ability to translate it into management responses as results-based management – and give ILRI DG and Board some comfort that there is a bit more rigor in the evaluation than we were able to achieve with SPAC. And it would also show that we are respecting the independence of the ISC and taking it seriously, without the ISC taking over decision-making as such.

A detailed annual schedule will be established with the ISC Chair and approved by the ISC at its inception meeting later this year.

**ISC member profile**

The terms of reference and proposed mode of operation have implications for selecting ISC members with an appropriate profile. While achieving appropriate diversity objectives will be important, the emphasis is clearly on a committee which represents strong scientific authority rather than representing a broader stakeholder function. A short list of candidates will now be finalized in consultation with the flagship leaders and reviewed by the PMC for recommendation to the ILRI DG and Board, for Board approval, including the nomination of the ISC Chair.

**Action**

For discussion and endorsement.

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Date: 6 May 2017

**Annex**

**Livestock CRP governance roles and relationships, from the perspective of the ILRI Board**

This table was presented by the CRP director to the ILRI Board to facilitate a discussion on the roles and reporting requirements of the different CRP entities to clarify whether the ILRI Board had access to the information it needed to fulfil its governance responsibility vis-à-vis the CRP.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Role | Reporting | Action by ILRI Board |
| ILRI Board | Final governance; fiduciary and reputational responsibility |  | Makes recommendations to ILRI management and CRP director |
| Independent Steering Committee | Advisory; reviews and evaluates strategy, Theory of Change, quality of scientific agenda and performance, partnership strategy of individual research lines, flagships and overall CRP;  Based on evaluation, recommends indicative changes in funding allocation (e.g. maintain /more /less) | Provides report and recommendations to CRP PMC for action  Shares report with ILRI management and Board for information  Meets with ILRI DG to present preliminary findings and feedback during ISC meeting  ISC Chair reports once a year to ILRI Board Program Committee to provide summary of findings and recommendations, and Q&A | Review reports when circulated; provide any clarification questions or raise any concerns with Board Program Committee Chair to communicate to the ISC  Dialogue with the ISC Chair in person during annual presentation |
| ILRI Management | Day-to-day management oversight and monitors and addresses partner concerns (i.e. the other DGs)  Makes ISC and ISC Chair nominations to ILRI Board | Provides first reviews of POWB, Annual report, Board reports, ISC reports | Provide recommendations to ILRI management to guide changes in CRP management and practices as needed  Approve ISC and ISC Chair nominations (including renewals) |
| CRP Management Committee | Recommends ISC and ISC Chair candidates, operational procedures and practices to ILRI DG; also embodies an element of governance in terms of its composition enabling partner participation in decision making |  | Provide recommendations as direct feedback and guidance to CRP director on issues raised or other concerns identified |
| CRP Director and Management Unit | Recommends operational procedures and practices to CRP management committee; chairs CRP management committee to reach consensus decisions | CRP director reports at each Board meeting on high-level issues related to the Board’s governance responsibility, including performance and challenges; also may communicate any governance issues raised by the CRP management committee |  |
|  |  | POWB provided for review before submission (could make sense given new narrative format) | Provides editorial comments to improve presentation; identifies any concerns meriting later discussion |
|  |  | Annual report provided for review before submission | Provides editorial comments to improve presentation; identifies any concerns meriting later discussion |